

*Remarks for the
Drug Endangered Children Conference
May 6, 2003*

- Recognize Frank Melton

- Pleased to welcome all of you to this conference
 - Thank you for commitment to our children

- *(this may be a good venue for the story of buying the football tee – influence of adults)*

- Sometimes we spend so much time worrying about what our children will become tomorrow that we forget they are already somebody today
 - Important to focus on making sure they have every opportunity to make the most of promise and potential

- Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- Unfortunately, there are people and influences out there who aren't concerned with this image
 - Drug dealers with regard only for profit
 - Meth labs that are dangers to people and property
 - The challenge is in removing those influences and those people

- We do that through strong law enforcement / prosecution of offenders

- We do it with help of professionals committed to our children
 - Professionals like each of you here today

- We do it by sharing in the raising of all our children / looking out for all of them
 - We can't afford to shortchange our kids
 - If we do, we shortchange our future

- It's been said our children are a message we send to a time we won't see
 - Like you, I want that message to be strong / healthy / happy

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- I also want it to be an image of children living successful, drug-free lives

- Appreciate your commitment to your work /
our children
 - I'm fighting to build our future based on
what our future can be
 - That future is our kids / begin building
the future today